

A.R.
C.XII.
Univ. of Toronto
1861-1917

1887

ADDRESS

AT THE CONVOCATION OF

University College, Toronto.

OCTOBER, 14th, 1887.

BY

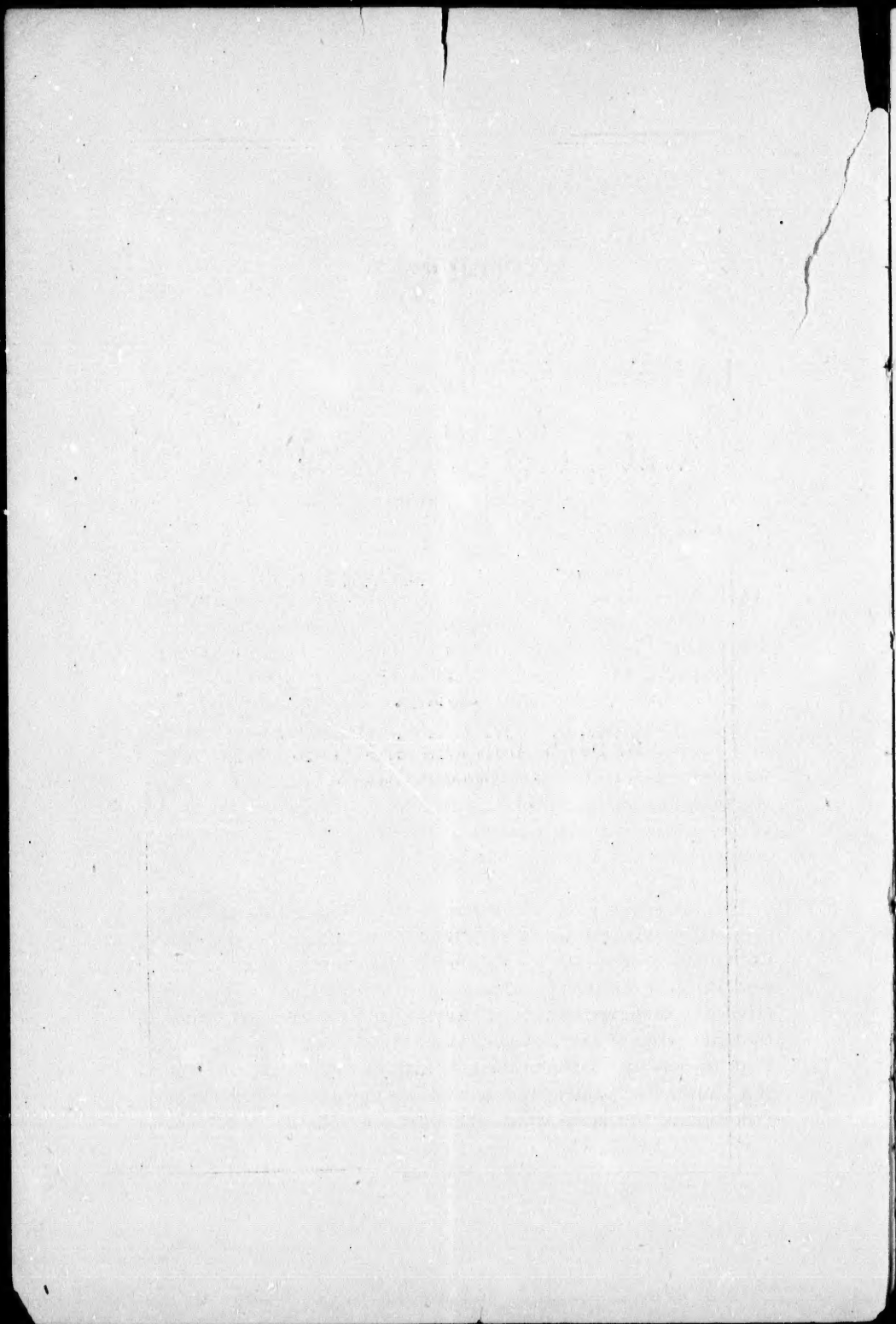
DANIEL WILSON, LL.D., F.R.S.E.

PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE.



TORONTO:
ROWSELL & HUTCHISON, PRINTERS.

1887.



ADDRESS
AT THE CONVOCATION OF
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, TORONTO,
OCTOBER 14TH, 1887.
BY
DANIEL WILSON, LL.D., F.R.S.E., PRESIDENT.

WE meet to-day as a College under peculiar circumstances, with our organization already modified by recent legislation; which nevertheless still awaits the proclamation of the Lieutenant-Governor before it can come into full effect. The primary object of the University Federation Act, in which we heartily sympathise, is the union of denominational Universities and Colleges in loyal co-operation with the national University for the furtherance of their common aims. Happily, however, the occasion has been turned to account for a revision of the University scheme in other aspects; and we welcome it as removing restrictions which had long hampered us.

This is all the more creditable to the Minister under whose special directions the measure has been framed, when it is seen that the tendency of recent legislation has been largely to undo the work of older reformers, and restore to the University rights and privileges conferred on it by its Royal Charter sixty years before. By that charter of 1827, a College was established at Toronto—or York, as our city was then called,—“with the style and privileges of a University;” and it was soon after endowed by patent with a portion of the lands which the wise foresight of the pilgrim

fathers of Upper Canada had set apart for higher education The University of King's College, as it was designated in the Royal Charter, had its professors in Arts, Medicine, and Law. It had also its faculty of Divinity, accompanied, in the terms of the original charter, with restrictions which, though modified by subsequent legislation, were a source of strife and controversy till their removal. But the changes effected in 1853, went far beyond such restrictions. Not only were the Faculties of Law and Medicine abolished, but the University was reduced to a mere board with the control of examinations and the conferring of degrees. As to the Faculty of Arts, it was remodelled, with important additions, as a distinct corporation, under the name of University College. With the functions thus severally assigned to University and College, the work of higher education was resumed; and in spite of many obstacles, has been prosecuted successfully for thirty-four years. When I entered on my duties as a professor in that same year in which the new University Bill was enacted, fresh from Edinburgh, with its famed school of medicine; and with its whole instruction in pure and applied science bearing the closest relations to medicine, I regarded the abolition of the medical faculty with unbounded astonishment. Its suppression would, under any circumstances, have surprised me; but the exclusion of all instruction in medicine seemed peculiarly inopportune at the very time when important additions were being made to departments of science, the immediate value of which would have been largely augmented but for that unfortunate step.

Happily, the conflict of opinion on political and ecclesiastical questions which then impeded the efforts at educational reorganization, is now a thing of the past. In the recent legislation on University Federation we have had the satisfaction of witnessing the harmonious cooperation of the Legislature in the effort to place higher education in Ontario on a more comprehensive basis; and the promptness with which the representatives of medicine have responded to our invitation, and united in the inauguration of the restored Medical Faculty is the best

evidence of the wisdom of the step. In conjunction with our enlarged department of science, with its Professorships and Lectureships in Biology, Physiology, Histology, Chemistry, and Physics; in addition to a promised lectureship in Botany, the revived Medical Faculty enters on a new career with abundant promise of success.

Other changes are not less noteworthy. In the Faculty of Arts the Classical Department is to be placed on a more efficient basis by the appointment of separate professors and lecturers for the Greek and the Latin Languages, and for Ancient History. The requirements for the Modern Languages have received like recognition. Special instructors are now provided in German, French, Italian, and Spanish; and a chair of the English Language is to be forthwith equipped, in addition to the lectureship already provided in that important branch. Physics and Mathematics are now, for the first time, to have their respective professors and lecturers; with the promised addition of chairs of Astronomy and Civil Engineering. The Physical Laboratory has been furnished with a valuable collection of apparatus for instruction in Mechanics, Acoustics, Light, and Heat; and further important additions are now being made in Electricity. The department of Mathematics is already known for good work accomplished in the past. When fully equipped, both in Mathematics and Physics, on the scale authorized by the Legislature, it cannot fail to commend itself to the Province by the fruits of its liberal training.

Provision is also made for the restoration of the Faculty of Law. If the Bar of Canada is to maintain its true place among the learned professions; and our own Provincial Courts are to train for the supreme tribunal of the Dominion men worthy to rank with the distinguished jurists of Great Britain and the United States: it is indispensable that adequate instruction shall be provided. The new act authorises the teaching of Constitutional Law, Jurisprudence, and Political Science; and along

with those important chairs, we have the promise of further additions, including Professorships in the History of Philosophy and in the Science of Education.

But underlying all this is the ever recurring element which controls the educator, no less than the statesman, the diplomatist, or the trader. The educational problem has become a financial one; and till that aspect of it has been satisfactorily dealt with, its promised results must remain unrealized. Meanwhile, however, means have been found for some desirable improvements; and as a first step, the promotion of Mr. Alfred Baker to the new chair of Mathematics will, I feel assured, be welcomed by every graduate and friend of the University as a just recognition of the merits of one whose mastery of the subject, and whose efficiency as a teacher, alike establish his claim to the appointment. The selection of Mr. Dale for the new Lectureship in Latin, will in like manner commend itself to all. But while we welcome those and other appointments, they for the most part only perpetuate, under new designations, the services of old teachers; while any increase either in their number or emoluments has been thus far obtained at the costly sacrifice of scholarships and prizes hitherto awarded in the Faculties of Arts, Medicine, and Law. There has been a further proposal to obtain additional lecture rooms by the sacrifice of the College Residence; but the unanimity of the protest against a proceeding so inimical to the best interests of the College is sufficient, I trust, to prevent so mischievous and shortsighted a policy. As to the scholarships and prizes, I am encouraged by liberal responses already made to my appeal, to anticipate their replacement from other sources.

The University Federation Act is accompanied by another whereby the proposed extension of the University is made to depend on the realization of a surplus accruing from property hitherto held by Upper Canada College. In reference to this it is only just to ourselves to say that, while we view with regret the application of any portion of the resources of Upper Canada

College to supply the needs of the University, we feel relieved from the necessity of protesting against the diversion of its funds to our use, by the fact that the report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the affairs of the University and Upper Canada College shows that the Council of King's College had, up to 1839, expended £34,409 15s. 6d., or nearly \$138,000 of the University funds for behoof of Upper Canada College; a debt, as the Commissioners remark, apart from any question of accumulated interest, "then considered very doubtful, subsequently much increased," and ultimately cancelled as hopeless. It must therefore be satisfactory to all parties if it shall prove that, owing to the greatly augmented value of the present site of Upper Canada College, it has become possible to repay some portion of this old debt without impairing the efficiency of an institution in whose welfare we all feel the deepest interest.

But the recovery of any portion of the debt is even now contingent on so many arrangements involving inevitable delay, that I am encouraged by the unanimity of the Legislature in the adoption of the recent enactment, to appeal to them to follow up that measure by the practical recognition of other and equally well founded claims of the University, so as to secure for the present generation the realization of their provisions for higher education. It is no question of class interest. If the national University fulfils its requirements as such, the entire community are interested in its liberal maintenance; and none so much so as the masses. We are proud of the fact that the record of those who have won its honors includes the names of men of rare gifts, who but for the educational advantages thus placed within reach of the very humblest, might have vainly struggled against social impediments. I cannot doubt that the liberal maintenance of higher education will be welcomed by the people of Ontario, whose fathers made such generous provision for its inception. The additions to the professoriate, as proposed in the departments of Mathematics and Physics; in the Natural Sciences, and in Jurisprudence and Political Economy, will all be of value. The last named subject has now assumed an importance in

general estimation which specially justifies the action of the Legislature. But it is a chair which more than most others will largely depend for its value on the wise selection of its incumbent. It is, moreover, indispensable that the chair of Political Science shall be placed financially on such a basis as to command the entire services of the professor ; and so, effectually protect him from any compromising relations, either with temporary political, or professional interests. Since the days of Adam Smith, the father of English Political Economy, Ricardo, Malthus, John Stewart Mill, Senior, and other acute reasoners, have enlarged the scope of Civil Polity until it has become a distinct ethical science, resting on higher grounds than mere supply and demand, or other accepted axioms of selfish economics. Its teachings must harmonize with those of the Professor of History, in so far as both may justly be expected to educe from the experience of the past, lessons to guide us in the determination of great constitutional principles ; in dealing with urgent social questions ; and solving financial problems on which the wealth of nations so largely depends. Manifestly the Professor to whom this important branch of education is entrusted, must be selected, like any other teacher of science, as a well trained searcher after truth ; not as the advocate of any current political cry. But the responsibility which the exercise of University patronage involves is by no means limited to this chair. The history both of ancient and modern Universities shows how largely their reputation has often been due to one or two men of mark, who have given an impetus to the whole culture of the schools, and left their impress on their age. The University is a mere abstraction apart from its teachers ; and it rests now mainly with the Minister of Education whether the new chairs shall be filled with mere tutorial drudges, or with men of high gifts and attainments who will make their influence felt on the rising generation,, and permanently elevate the intellectual standard of the whole Dominion.

With the inevitable delays before any surplus can accrue from the Upper Canada College appropriation, the relative importance of the new chairs must be kept in view. Foremost in value for

our immediate requirements are the Professorships in English and Latin, and the new chairs in Constitutional Law and Jurisprudence. In the Natural Sciences the Lectureships in Physiology and Botany, and also a lecturer in Mathematics, will be welcome additions. The value of a Professoriate embracing Astronomy, Moral Philosophy, Comparative Philology, the History of Philosophy, and other subjects specified in the recent statute, cannot be slighted in any scheme for a thoroughly equipped University Faculty. But some of them are luxuries which must be held in reserve till our pressing needs are supplied. As to the proposed chair of Education, or Pedagogics as the Germans call it: whatever may be its practical value, it lies outside the requirements of the general body of students, as well as of our pressing needs as a University. Under any circumstances its utility must depend on the choice of an educator of the highest class for the chair. But, in view of the special character of this Professorship, designed like those in medicine, for professional, as distinct from purely educational training: it is only reasonable that the Education Department should provide the salary.

It is from no sectional prejudice, that I thus estimate the relative utility of proposed chairs; or their claims to be charged on the endowment. But looking to the demands on our inadequate resources which the recent statute involves, the action of the Legislature becomes a mockery, "to keep the word of promise to the ear, and break it to our hope," unless supplemented by funds in some degree adequate to secure the realisation of their ideal. But I am not without hope that, when our claims are fully understood, their reasonableness will be acknowledged. In the recent arrangements for providing accommodation for the Legislature, a site has been appropriated on the University grounds, which with their confirmation, was, in 1858, leased to the city, on the express covenant that no building should ever be erected thereon. But by a prior Act of the Canadian Parliament, provision was made for the erection of "a Parliament House, and buildings for the accommodation of the several public departments, on such portion of the grounds forming part of the University Endowment

as may be found requisite, and such"—it was enacted,—“shall be vested in the Crown for the public uses of the Province.” The Act further declares that the land thus appropriated “shall be valued, and the interest of the value thereof so ascertained, at six per cent. per annum, shall be paid yearly out of the Consolidated Revenue fund to the credit of the University income fund, and shall forever form part thereof.” This Act, so far as I can ascertain, has never been repealed. The rights then acquired are now being exercised; and the moral obligation to fulfil the terms on which they were obtained cannot be ignored.

As to the power of the Legislature to appropriate for its own use the site originally designed for the University buildings, it would be vain for the University Council or Senate to dispute it. Its advantages have only been too obvious. It is declared in their Act of 1880, to be “the most eligible for the purpose.” But if so, it is right that I should recall the fact that the Act of 1853 provided that all property vested in the corporation of the Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the University shall, from and after the coming into force of that Act, be vested in the Crown. Moreover, by the University Act of the same year, both the Senate and the College Council ceased to have authority in the administration of University property, or any power to dispose of it; and the Bursar became an officer of the Crown. The Government have therefore been from that date, and are now the sole trustees of the property. Any formal concurrence by the Senate of the University, either as to the leasing of lands to the city, or their appropriation by the Legislature, could have no force in relieving the Provincial Executive from their responsibility. It is an obvious duty to draw the attention of the Legislature to the terms on which the site of their new buildings was originally appropriated for such use. The Province is led to anticipate a large return from the sale of their former site. Some portion at least of that is manifestly due to the University for the more eligible one, where, on the 23rd of April, 1842, the Governor-General, Sir Charles Bagot, as Chancellor of the University, with

impressive ceremonial laid the foundation stone which, during the past year, has been so unceremoniously displaced.

In view of past proceedings thus recalled to notice, and the actual saving to the whole Province arising from the appropriation of the old University site, it cannot be deemed an unreasonable proposal that the Legislature shall give practical effect to their late statute by endowing at least two of the new chairs, therein declared to be indispensable for the efficient organization of the University.

This plea is urged not only on grounds of equity, but in the interests of higher education for the whole Province. The principle which underlies the idea of University federation will yet, I trust, assert itself in all the amplitude of a generous sympathy with whatever tends to promote true learning in any intellectual centre. It is a narrow spirit of rivalry that induces some friends of denominational colleges to resent the provision of adequate equipment for the Provincial University. No one can impartially review the successive steps by which it has systematically revised its courses; and once and again elevated its whole standard, so as to avail itself of every improvement in the High Schools of the Province,—due in no inconsiderable degree to the men trained by itself to fill their masterships;—and at the same time note the extent to which its example has influenced other institutions of learning far beyond the limits of Ontario: without recognising that the interests of higher education in Canada are largely identified with its prosperity. It cannot be too strongly insisted on that the success of national education is the measure and standard of a people's healthful progress. The nations of the world take rank according to their fidelity to it; and their greatness, alike in ancient and modern times, has been in proportion to the zeal with which they have fostered intellectual culture, and made truth their highest aim.

Looking at this question of national education as it is affected by University federation, I entertain sanguine hopes of the

results. It is only by united action in some form that denominational influence can exercise any legitimate effect on national education. If the cooperation of colleges under the Control of various Christian Churches, with one maintained by the State in the interests of all, lend effectual aid in sustaining a high moral and religious tone among the undergraduates, one all-important aim will be accomplished. On the other hand, I look to the conflict of opinion, and diversities in teaching, resulting from the healthful rivalry of Colleges acting in concert as affiliated members of one University, for protection from the stereotyped rigidity which has been charged as the danger of all national systems. This is, indeed, already guarded against in no inconsiderable degree by the honor departments of the University scheme, which not only encourage different lines of study, but give fair scope to the intellectual specialist, and leave to all students some choice in the determination of their undergraduate course.

But there is another evil, the product to a large extent of modern appeal to examinations as the supreme test of all qualifications for office or appointment. It has been questioned if Walpole, one of the foremost financial ministers, could have satisfied a modern civil service examiner; and as to Wellington, he would certainly have been plucked by the martinet of the Woolwich board. Examinations have their proper place in every collegiate system. I know of no better substitute as a test of actual work done in the lecture room and laboratory, especially when conducted by experienced teachers. But the extremists have not only effected a divorce between examiner and teacher: they would fain substitute examination for the teacher's work. With such the ideal University of the future is a Board of Examiners and a file of text-books. Under this influence rival programmes outvie each other in the multiplicity of prescribed book-work; nor can I claim for our own curriculum an absolute exemption from the taint. Every system, whether for school or college, is objectionable which relies mainly on the perfecting of educational machinery, and fails to leave scope for the personal influence of the teacher. Some prescribed course is indispensable.

ble ; but if the instructor is worthy of his trust, what he communicates *con amore*, as having a special interest for himself, will be most likely to kindle enthusiasm in the student. Routine work is ever apt to lapse into drudgery, unless animated by the enkindling flash of impromptu illustration.

Sir John Lubbock justly remarks : "One great mistake in education is, as it seems to me, the worship of book-learning,—the confusion of instruction and education. We strain the memory, instead of cultivating the mind." The school-boy is doubtless as clay in the hand of the potter ; but that is no justification of the tendency of modern educational systems to fashion a single departmental mould in which all shall be shaped according to the one regulation pattern.

This evil is to be deprecated at every stage, but in the work of the University most of all. There is a growing inclination to overload every department with an amount of book-work which must reduce the teacher to a mere monitorial drudge, and help to give countenance to the idea that any man whose name has figured in the honor lists is amply qualified for a Professor's chair. At this critical stage in the history of the University, when not only important additions are about to be made to the Faculty of Arts ; but the restored Faculties of Law and Medicine have to be reorganized : its future for another generation depends on the choice of men who are to constitute the new Professoriate. We must have teachers with higher claims than the tests of the examination hall supply, if we would escape the risk of stamping a whole generation with the same mediocrity. We want, if possible, for every University chair, men of original power and genius in their own special branches. No one is deserving of so responsible a trust, in which he is to mould and fashion the minds of the most gifted among those who are before long to take the place of our present leaders, who does not himself possess gifts such as no University pretends either to confer, or to accredit by its honor-lists. Whatever be the University requirements, no man is worthy of one of its

chairs, who has not much of his own to communicate beyond any prescribed curriculum. The most valuable influence of a teacher is to be looked for in the sympathetic enthusiasm, which he enkindles in the minds of his students, broadening and elevating their aspirations, quickening the dry bones of academic routine, and vitalising it with living fire.

Once more it is our privilege to welcome, in increasing numbers, the candidates entering on their undergraduate course, as well as those who now resume the work of later years. Nevertheless it is under such circumstances of assured progress that we to-day hold our last Convocation as a College. In the graceful narrative of the University from the pen of Dr. Scadding, he refers to University College as "the concrete presentment of the somewhat abstract entity" to which the University of Toronto was reduced by the Act of 1853. But that state of things has now come to an end. The University is entering anew on its legitimate work with ampler powers; and practically absorbs the College as a complementary part of the system. The duration of the latter has been brief, if measured by the life-time of ancient seats of learning. Nevertheless, for upwards of a third of the century, which now draws onward to its close, we have successfully prosecuted the work entrusted to us. The sons of earlier graduates have followed in their fathers' steps; our numbers have progressively advanced till our halls are crowded with students; and the demand is now for ampler room. We have trained two generations from their entrance on an undergraduate course till they proceeded to their degree; and have watched with interest the success achieved by many of them in various spheres of life. Now, as a third generation prepares to follow in their steps, one important cycle in the history of this institution is completed.

It is with no sense of failure that we see University College merge anew into the institution from whence it sprung; and become a satellite in the University system of which, for thirty-four years, it has constituted the most essential member. It has numbered among its Professors men whose memories are cherished with

a just sense of their worth; and foremost among them the distinguished scholar—my predecessor in this chair,—who has passed away in the fulness of his years, since our last College Convocation; but whose influence survives in the enduring fruits of his aptitude as a teacher; and in the high standard which he determined for classical scholarship in Canada. So long as the College has been efficiently equipped it has fulfilled the duties entrusted to it. But its record is now closed as a Faculty of Arts. The Chancellor justly remarked in his last address to the University, while the details of the Legislative measure which has since become law could only be surmised, that “the success of University College will depend on the strength of its staff.” This test of all academic possibilities—strength in numbers, still more, strength in intellectual capacity and teaching power,—is indisputable; and tried by its standard, the thing called University College, if standing alone, would fail. But for the actual work assigned to it, ample power is assured; and when it receives the promised additions, including Professors and Lecturers in English and Latin, in Oriental Languages, and Ancient History, it will take its place in the reorganised University: while with renewed hope we look down the long vista to be trodden by the foot-prints of younger generations, and anticipate for Ontario, and for Canada, the rich dawn of an ampler day.

The University of Toronto is identified in its inception with historical events of memorable importance. The loyal pioneers of Upper Canada who here reared for themselves homes under the shelter of the British Flag, had scarcely effected their first settlement on the shores of the great lakes, when they gave evidence of their intellectual sympathies and wise foresight, by efforts to secure some adequate provision for the education of their sons. No more creditable incident can be recalled in the early history of any country. It illustrates the character of the founders of Upper Canada as men of no ordinary type; differing indeed widely from the Puritan pilgrims of New England; but not unworthy to rank alongside of them as planters of another vigorous offshoot of the British oak. So long as their descendants

worthily maintain the inheritance thus bequeathed to them, they will recall with pride the incident which presents its hardy pioneers while literally hewing out their first clearings in the forest, and displacing the Indian wigwam with the log-hut of the farmer, thus anticipating the wants of later generations, and dedicating 500,000 acres of the uncleared wilderness to provide for the educational requirements of the infant state. To them, and not to the Royal Donor of its charter, this University owes the gratitude due to its founders. Nor have they missed their reward. The roll of its distinguished graduates already includes the names of men who have borne an honorable part as statesmen in critical times; who have taken the highest rank on the Bench and at the Bar; and have creditably filled responsible posts in academic, civic, and commercial life. But we are even now in the gristle, and have yet to progress to a well developed maturity. The acorn that some autumn gale of that elder century dropped in the solitude of the Canadian forest now spreads its branches to the winds, a vigorous young oak; and, if left untouched by rude hands, may flourish a thousand years hence, a memorial of our historic dawn: like the Conqueror's Oak in the Royal Chase, associated with the deeds of William of Normandy; or Herne's Oak, the memorial of the later age of England's Maiden Queen, and Shakespeare's "Merry Wives of Windsor."

But neither oak nor seat of learning can flourish, if subjected to constant transplanting or endless unrest. Time is needed ere the healthy sapling realize the motto, "*velut arbor ævo*," which voices the University's symbolic crest of the Maple Tree. We have, indeed, seen in the history of the Cornell and Johns Hopkins Universities what can be accomplished by such institutions when started on their career with an adequate endowment. Nor, with its narrower resources, has this University failed to make a name for itself; or train more than one generation to do it honor. But much has yet to be accomplished before even Harvard or Yale can claim equality with the venerable centres of Europe's academic life: with their alumni, the world's

true nobility, by whom the thoughts of generations have been widened ; and science has been mastered for the service of mankind. They were the strongholds of intellectual life in ages of darkness and ignorance. We recognise in them the source of Europe's re-awakening ; and hail the promise of a still brighter renaissance for ourselves. Let it not be our shame that " knowledge grows, but wisdom lingers." The sources of all true progress are at our disposal. It rests with those to whom the equipment of this University is entrusted to determine whether we shall bear our part in the seed time of future centuries, or with niggard parsimony leave our sons to reap where they have not sown.
